

Through the Jungle

A traveler's Guide

by Samantha W. Adams

iUniverse, Inc. 2004

Reviewed by Dave Parker

This is the personal story of three years of Samantha's life as she transitioned male to female. It is told as a series of diary entries written as the events happened, interspersed with dream sequences and discussion added later as the book was written. More than just a story of what happened; it is an examination of her emotional highs and lows throughout this period.

Every person experiences their transsexual feelings differently, yet there are similarities. Samantha expresses her experience as the Beast of fear chasing her through the jungle of her emotions as she pursues her unknown future. Her diary format chronicles the highs and lows of accomplishment and setback. She loses friends, but gains new friends in unexpected places. Her father and wife are supportive throughout, while her mother gains acceptance only slowly. She transitions while employed; most coworkers react negatively, while a few are supportive. Late in her transition, her wife leaves her for a woman Samantha had considered a close friend.

Like many transsexuals, Samantha begins transition self-dosing with various hormones without professional medical care. Once she consulted a physician, she was told that she may have damaged her liver and sped up the effects of her diabetes. She cautions those following her NOT to self-dose hormones, since there can be many unexpected side effects and each person's dosage may be different.

"Making the change male to female is not all bad and dark," she reports. "The worst parts came from my own thoughts and imagination trying to make mountains out of nothing."

Samantha's book includes a lengthy series of 23 steps to full transition, with the caveat that these are HER steps. It also includes a wonderful letter to her church – which refused to baptize her as scheduled when the pastor was told she was transgendered.

The book closes with a brief story by female to male Miles Newman, close friend to Samantha and copy editor of her book.

"Not every single person who you meet wants to do you harm; sometimes they, just like yourself, simply want not to be alone when they eat their dinner."